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(1) Prime Minister Abe, President Bush shake hands before their meeting in Sydney.

Photo only

(2) Abe ready to step down if refueling mission in Indian Ocean not continued

ASAHI (Online news) (Full)
September 9, 2007 (20:25)

Prime Minister Abe met the press at a Sydney hotel today, during which he referred to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which is to expire Nov. 1. "The Diet is now in a very difficult situation," Abe noted. "But," he said, "its extension has now become an international commitment." He added: "So I bear a heavy responsibility. I will make efforts at the risk of my position." Furthermore, Abe also declared that his cabinet would resign in a body to take political responsibility should he fail to

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get Diet approval to continue Japan's refueling mission, saying he would not then cling to his duties as prime minister.

The government will introduce a bill extending the MSDF's refueling activities. In this regard, Abe stressed that he would have to make his utmost efforts particularly in order to get the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan's understanding. "I will do my best," Abe said, "and I will stake my position on it." In addition, he also said he would like to meet with DPJ President Ozawa as soon as possible. With this, he indicated that he would ask Ozawa in a meeting to support the legislation.

In the press conference, Abe was asked if his cabinet was ready to resign in a body if Japan cannot continue its refueling mission. In response to this question, Abe clarified his intention to step down if Japan cannot extend its refueling activities. "I will have to fulfill my duties as prime minister while making every possible effort to do whatever I can," he said. "Of course," he added, "I have no intention of clinging to my duties (if I fail)."

(3) Defense chief, Okinawa differ on Futenma relocation

TOKYO (Page 2) (Full)
September 9, 2007

Defense Minister Masahiko Komura yesterday made his first visit to Okinawa Prefecture since assuming his post. During his Okinawa visit, Komura met with Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima and Nago Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro to talk about the pending issue of relocating the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan to Camp Schwab, a US military base in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago. However, they clearly differed in their respective perceptions over an assessment of Futenma relocation's possible impact on the local environment. Their meetings resulted in sparking off their different standpoints.

Japan and the United States have now agreed on a plan to lay down a V-shaped pair of airstrips in a coastal area of Camp Schwab as an alternative for Futenma airfield. In his meeting with Nakaima, Komura explained the relocation plan, saying it is a "balanced, rational" plan from the perspectives of natural and living

environments and also from the aspect of feasibility.

Meanwhile, the government has now already asked Okinawa Prefecture in written form for its consent to a plan to implement an environmental impact assessment without obtaining local understanding. The government is thus poised to enter into procedures for Futenma relocation. "We'd like to hold rational talks while taking a look at specific data that will come out of the environmental assessment." With this, Komura sought Nakaima's understanding while implying the possibility of retouching the Futenma relocation plan.

However, Nakaima expressed concern, saying: "The government should go ahead with an environmental assessment after we have reached agreement. If the government goes ahead, the plan will only fall behind schedule for a couple of years." Furthermore, Nakaima asked Komura to move the planned site of Futenma relocation to an offshore point that is as far as possible from the coast. With this, Nakaima urged the government to make changes in the current Futenma relocation plan before going ahead with an environmental assessment, citing aircraft noise and other factors that could deteriorate the

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living environment of local residents. In the end, Komura and Nakaima reached no agreement.

However, Komura remained tough in his press meeting. "The governor didn't say we must not go ahead with the environmental assessment."

Komura is in a hurry to go through procedures for an environmental assessment. That is because Komura is aware of a time limit set to complete Futenma relocation by 2014.

Furthermore, both Tokyo and Okinawa want to relocate Futenma airfield as early as possible. Komura therefore deems it possible to get local understanding in the end even after going ahead with the environmental assessment without obtaining local consent, according to a senior official of the Defense Ministry.

However, the government is legally required to ask for the governor's authorization to reclaim land from the sea in public waters to build a new airfield.

"We've yet to agree," Nakaima said. He added, "If they do so as they like, I can't say that's okay." There is no knowing if the government can go ahead with its Futenma relocation plan as expected by Komura.

(4) Prime Minister Abe in meeting with President Bush expresses resolve to make utmost efforts to extend Antiterrorism Law

NIKKEI (Top Play) (Full)
Evening, September 8, 2007

Makoto Nakayama, Sydney

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held a bilateral meeting with United States President Bush at a Sydney hotel on the morning of Sept. 8. In reference to the ongoing refueling operations by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in the Indian Ocean based on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which is to expire on Nov. 1, Abe said: "Since the law must be extended without fail, I will make utmost efforts to that end." Bush replied: "We expect Japan will continue to offer assistance." The two leaders also agreed to take joint steps to urge North Korea to give up on its all nuclear program.

This was the fourth meeting between the Japanese and US leaders since Abe assumed office, following the one in June in Heiligendamm, Germany, and the first meeting since the ruling coalition suffered a crushing defeat in the earlier House of Councillors election.

At the outset of the meeting, the prime minister emphasized: "There has been no change in the Abe administration's basic diplomatic and security policies even after the Upper House election." He then said he would work to strengthen the "irreplaceable Japan-US alliance" in

the security, economic and many other areas.

The prime minister promised to make utmost efforts in the upcoming extraordinary Diet session to start Sept. 10 to enable the MSDF to continue its refueling operations by extending the Antiterrorism Law. Abe told Bush that he would continue to persuade the Democratic Party of Japan to make a policy switch to agree to extend the law. Bush welcomed the prime minister's commitment, remarking: "(The continuation of Japan's refueling operations) is absolutely

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necessary for all the members in the international community participating in the war on terrorism, including the US."

Regarding North Korea's nuclear problem, the leaders of Japan and the US shared the need to swiftly translate into action the agreements reached between the US and North Korea, including disabling North Korea's nuclear facilities by the end of the year and having the North declare its nuclear development programs. The prime minister spelled out the outcome of the working group meeting held in Ulan Bator between Japan and North Korea on normalizing diplomatic ties, expressing his resolve to continue negotiations with the North in a bid to resolve such pending issues as North Korea's past abductions of Japanese nationals. The president stated: "I understand the abduction problem is an issue of sensitivity in Japan. We will never let the issue be forgotten."

In discussing the issue of global warming, both leaders agreed on the need for Japan and the US to cooperate each other to produce specific results at the international conference sponsored by the US in late September and the major industrialized countries' summit meeting (Late Toya Summit) next year. As for a post-Kyoto framework for combating global warming beyond the 2012 framework set under the Kyoto Protocol, they shared the view that the new framework should be an effective one that would include all major emitters of global warming gases.

On Japan's setting of the age limit of cattle whose meat is eligible for import at 20 months as a BSE safeguard measure, the president renewed a call on Japan to remove this import condition. Abe just replied: "We will conduct studies based on scientific knowledge, on the great premise of giving priority to securing food safety for the people."

The prime minister indicated that the government would steadily carry out the reorganization of the US forces in Japan as agreed on between the governments of the two countries. He then called for US cooperation in realizing the proposed joint use of Yokota Air Base by the US military and Japanese commercial planes.

After the meeting, President Bush said: "Japan's operations are significant not only for the US but also for other countries." Prime Minister Abe said: "We agreed on the importance of Japan's refueling activities."

(5) Main points of Japan-US summit

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
Eve., September 8, 2007

The following is a gist of the summit meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Bush.

Antiterrorism Special Measures Law

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe: I think it is necessary to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. I'll make my utmost effort to continue the mission.

President George W. Bush: We appreciate Japan's contributions. Refueling activities are essential for the United States and other members of the international community participating in the war on terror. I hope to see continued assistance.

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North Korea

The prime minister and the US president agreed to seek through the six-party talks North Korea's swift action to materialize the complete abandonment of its nuclear programs.

Bush: I understand Japan's sensitivity to the abduction issue. We will never let the abduction issue be forgotten.

Abe: We will continue talks in order to achieve substantive results, including on the abduction issue.

Measures against global warming

The two leaders agreed to create an effective framework that would involve all major greenhouse-gas emitters in order to make next year's Group of Eight (G-8) summit conference in Lake Toya, Hokkaido, a success.

Beef imports

Bush: We hope to see a removal of the current limit on the age of cattle.

Abe: We will examine the issue based on scientific knowledge, while giving the highest consideration to the food safety of the Japanese people,.

(6) Japan, US taking special pains to show close cooperation at summit meeting

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
Eve., September 8, 2007

Hideo Kato, Makoto Nakayama, Sydney

At their first Japan-US summit meeting on Sept. 8 since Japan's Upper House election, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Bush took special pains to show they were closely cooperating in the war on terror and on the North Korean nuclear issue. The motivations of both leaders were driven by their desires to use diplomacy in order to boost their respective weakened political base at home due to domestic circumstances. The Upper House of the Japanese Diet is now under the opposition bloc's control, while in the Democratic Party holds a majority in the US Congress. However, concern is growing that bilateral cooperation is not necessarily going well on the North Korean nuclear issue, the lead of which has been taken by talks between the US and North Korea.

Bush: "The role played by Japan is important. I'd like to express appreciation to the Japanese people."

Abe: "I think it is important for the international community to keep united on the war on terror."

After the summit, the two leaders made these remarks to reporters regarding the Maritime Self-Defense Force' (MSDF) refueling of vessels in the Indian Ocean from the US and other countries. They emphasized the importance of Japan's contributions to the war on terror led mainly by the US and Britain in Afghanistan.

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The legal basis for Japan's refueling operations is the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, but it expires on Nov. 1. The government is considering submitting a bill extending the law to an upcoming extraordinary session of the Diet to be convened on Sept. 10, but the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), now the largest party in the Upper House, is taking a confrontational stance against the ruling parties.

The Abe administration believes the Japan-US alliance could be rocked by the ending of the MSDF's mission in the Indian Ocean. If that were to happen, it would also affect the Abe administration's

main slogan, "assertive diplomacy" through international contributions. Bolstered by a direct call from Bush for an extension of the mission, Abe intends to push back against the opposition bloc at the upcoming extraordinary Diet session.

The MSDF's withdrawal from its refueling operations now going on in the Indian Ocean would affect US troops' operations in military terms, and it would also lead to shaking the "international coalition" on the war against terrorism, including the Iraq war.

Growing calls in the US for a withdrawal of its troops from Iraq are attributable mainly to the discontent that "only the US forces are forced to make a lot of sacrifices." In the presidential campaign for the next year, Democratic candidates are intensifying their criticism that "the Bush administration has been isolated from the international community." Given that Bush diplomacy has been marked by fraying at its edges, Japan's cooperation by extending the refueling mission may be the "last line to which he cannot compromise on the diplomatic front.

The two leaders agreed to urge North Korea to implement steps for denuclearization, but it is obvious that there are gaps between Japan and the US when it comes to approaches to the North. The US has shifted to a dialogue line with the North, while Japan's position is not to offer any assistance if there is no progress on the abduction issue. On the issue of whether to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, Bush indicated he would take into account the abduction issue, but some people doubt the US, arguing it is questionable how far the US will act together with Japan.

(7) Trilateral US, Japan, Australia summit: Three leaders stress international contributions in war on terror, aiming partly at softening up DPJ's stance toward extension of Antiterrorism Law

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
Evening, September 8, 2007

Hiroaki Matsunaga, Sydney

The question of extending Japan's Antiterrorism Special Measures Law for the Maritime Self-Defense Force's continued refueling mission in the Indian Ocean took center stage at a Japan-US summit and a trilateral Japan-US-Australia summit on September 8. Although President George W. Bush, expressing his strong hope for Japan's contributions, effectively pressed Japan for continued MSDF operations, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe failed to present any specific means to break the impasse, simply pledging maximum efforts.

In the Japan-US summit, the US side clearly expressed its hope for Japan's continued refueling mission. In a press interview held late

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last month, President Bush had also expressed his hope that Japan's proactive influence would be maintained.

America's strong call for Japan's continued commitment comes from the high evaluation of the MSDF mission by other countries taking part in the maritime interdiction operations (MIO) in the northern Indian Ocean. MIO was initiated by the United States and Britain as part of the war on terrorism following 9/11.

To support MIO, Japan has dispatched an MSDF destroyer and two supply vessels on a four-month rotation under the Antiterrorism Law. As of August 20, the MSDF provided a total of 480,000 kiloliters of fuel on 774 occasions to naval vessels of such countries as the United States, Pakistan, and France.

But now that the ruling bloc no longer holds its control of the House of the Councillors due to its defeat in the July election, the government finds it difficult to extend the Antiterrorism Law beyond November 1. The government and ruling coalition is considering a new law that takes in the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan's demands. But the DPJ leadership, including President Ichiro Ozawa, remains opposed to an extension. Japan, the United States, and Australia confirmed the need to extend the MSDF mission partly with

the aim of softening up the DPJ's stance by sending a message that Japan's continued international contribution is consistent with Ozawa's view that Japan should actively take part in collective defense.

Main points from Japan-US-Australia summit

- ? Agreement reached to make greater efforts in dealing with Asia-Pacific and global issues.
- ? The United States and Australia gave high marks to Japan's contribution to the war on terrorism. Prime Minister Abe pledged maximum efforts for an extension of the MSDF refueling mission in the Indian Ocean.
- ? Agreement reached on the need to become constructively involved with China.
- ? Agreement reached on the need to denuclearize North Korea.
- ? Agreement reached to aim for results at the APEC forum on climate change.

(8) US denies that MSDF fuel supplied in Indian Ocean being used for Iraq operations

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
Evening, September 8, 2007

Yoichi Kato, Washington

The US Navy's website at one point carried an explanation on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's mission in the Indian Ocean being carried out under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. Although the US Defense Department has eliminated the description before it escalated into a political problem in Japan, it is still busy offering an explanation.

Under the title Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the US Fifth Fleet website said at one point that the Japanese government has provided over 86,629,675 gallons of fuel worth 76 million dollars. Although the text also indicated that the figures were since Operation Enduring Freedom signifying the war in Afghanistan started, it could

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be interrelated to mean that the MSDF also provided fuel to naval vessels taking part in the Iraq war.

Because the Antiterrorism Law is strictly based on the war in Afghanistan, House of Representatives member Kenji Eda, an independent who took notice of this description, raised the suspicion that the MSDF might have fueled vessels taking part in the Iraq war as well. It has created a sensation, as seen the Democratic Party of Japan's move to pursue the issue in the Diet.

The government is desperately trying to extend the law beyond November 1 despite stiff resistance from the opposition. However, the next regular Diet session is set to convene on September 10 with no bright prospect for the government.

Given the situation, the Japanese government asked the US side to make a proper response, saying that what appeared on the US Navy's website would make matters more difficult for Tokyo. As a result, the US has decided to offer a new explanation in addition to eliminating the description.

To an inquiry by the Asahi Shimbun, the US Department of Defense replied on September 7: "The page in question has been revised so as not to give any misconception. Japan has provided fuel only for vessels supporting OEF."

(9) Machimura promises Rice intelligence security; Rice expresses hope for Japan's continuation of antiterrorism operations

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
September 8, 2007

Chikara Ishiai, Sydney

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura and US Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice held talks on Sept. 7 in Sydney. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Machimura, referring to information leakage regarding the Aegis defense system, revealed that Japan would take measures for intelligence security. He told Rice: "We will take measures to reform the entire government system."

Touching also on the issue of joint use of Yokota Air Force Base by the military and private sectors, Machimura stated: "The Japanese government as a whole wants to bring it to fruition. I would like the US State Department to support the plan." Rice reportedly responded: "We want to consider it in a serious manner."

Machimura explained the Japanese government's position of doing its utmost to extend the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. He said: "We will do our best to obtain understanding from the opposition camp for the continuation of the MSDF's refueling mission (in the Indian Ocean)." He reportedly did not mention a new law, which the government is now mulling. Rice reportedly expressed her expectations for the continuation of MSDF's mission, saying, "Japan's operations are indispensable for the international community's fight against terrorism."

Machimura stated also on Japan's support for Iraq:

"Japan will carry out assistance as much as possible through transport support by the Air Self-Defense Force, as well as the

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government's official development assistance (ODA)."

(10) Political fund record-keeping error concerning 1 million yen in donation made in 2003 also found in report filed by Internal Affairs Minister Masuda's fund management body

MAINICHI (Page 31) (Full)
September 8, 2007

It was learned that Internal Affairs and Communication Minister (MIAC) Hiroya Masuda's political organization (disbanded in December 2006) when he was a governor of Iwate Prefecture entered 1 million yen as a donation made to Masuda's fund management body (also disbanded in Dec. 2006), and yet the body's political fund report did not record the receipt of that money. The body explained that although the donation was made to Masuda himself, his fund management body issued a receipt in confusion, causing the political organization to record an erroneous name as the recipient of the donation. The top person of MIAC, which is tasked with controlling payment reports filed by political parties and political organizations straddling more than on prefecture, was found to have been involved in the sloppy filing of a fund report.

According to the claim made in the political fund report filed by the Iwate 21 Kai, Masuda's political organization, the organization donated 1 million yen to the Yumekendo Iwate 21, Masuda's fund management body. The report was attached with a receipt of the 1 million yen issued by the fund management body. However, the Yumekendo Iwate 21's payment report had no record of the receipt of the donation worth 1 million yen. Masuda was elected governor for the third term in the gubernatorial election held in April the same year right after this donation was made.

Toshiyuki Hayashi, secretary to Masuda, said, "The donation was received as a mid-election-campaign contribution." He explained that the receipt of that money was entered into the political campaign expenditure report filed right after the gubernatorial election. Regarding the fact that the receipt was issued under the name of the political fund management body, Hayashi said, "I do not know why this has happened. However, there is no discrepancy, because Masuda's name is also mentioned,"

The head of the administrative office of the Yumekendo Iwate 21 at the time noted, "I believe the donation was made to Masuda himself, but it was received as a donation to his fund management body, because the election was close at hand." Regarding the issuance of the receipt by the fund management body, he said, "I cannot recall

correctly. It might have issued it by mistake."

Masuda, former bureaucrat of the now defunct construction ministry, was for the first time elected Iwate governor fully backed by the New Frontier Party led by Ichiro Ozawa, now president of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto). Though he has kept his distance from Ozawa after that, he was elected for the third time, adopting a local manifesto for the first time in domestic elections. He was known as a reformist at the Association of Prefectural Governors. He has proposed adopting decentralization and a doshu (province) system.

(11) Government decides not to extend emergency aid to DPRK for damage caused by floods, citing no progress on abduction issue

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MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
September 10, 2007

The government yesterday decided not to respond to the United Nations' call to the international community to extend emergency aid (totaling approximately 1.6 trillion yen) to North Korea, which has suffered from flood damage. It has judged that hasty provision of aid to that nation would not be able to obtain public understanding, because a Japan-DPRK working group meeting held Sept 5-6 in Mongolia to discuss normalization achieved no progress.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano on Sept. 4 told a news conference, "There is a possibility of humanitarian assistance being put before political difficulties." He thus had indicated a positive stance to aid to the DPRK, noting that extending humanitarian assistance can be considered independent of the government policy of not extending economic and energy aid as agreed on at the six-nation talks, without progress of the abduction issue.

However, the DPRK during the working group meeting remained unchanged on its stance toward the abduction issue, claiming that the issue had been settled. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the 6th revealed his perception that it could not be said that an achievement had been made. A senior Foreign Ministry official noted on the 7th, "The government stance has taken the stand that there could be no humanitarian assistance without a settlement of the human right issue. It would be impossible for it to extend aid to that nation, if national sentiments on this issue are taken into account."

(12) Japanese government turns down request for port call by North Korean cargo ship; Chongryon complains

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
September 8, 2007

The pro-Pyongyang General Federation of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon or Chosen Soren) Vice Chairman Nam Sung U on Sept. 7 held a press conference in Tokyo. He told reporters that the Japanese government returned a letter of request that Chongryon submitted to it on the 6th asking for its approval for a port call by a North Korean vessel to transport relief goods to flood victims in that nation. Nam criticized the government's response, saying, "It was an inhumane and unfriendly act." Following the nuclear test conducted by North Korea, Japan has placed a blanket ban on port calls by North Korean vessels.

(13) MSDF oil supplied in Indian Ocean was used in Iraq war

SHUKAN SHINCHO (Page 36) (Full)
September 13, 2007

A new allegation has surfaced regarding the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which will be the highest focus of attention of the extraordinary session of the Diet that opens September 10. Originally, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) was supposed supply fuel oil at sea on the Indian Ocean for use in Afghan operations, but reportedly, that fuel has been used by the US forces in operations in Iraq.

On the late-night talk show, Asa Made Nama Terebi (Live TV until dawn) on Aug. 31, independent lawmaker Kenji Eda brought up this

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charge. According to Eda, Ministry of Defense documents show that US warships received a total of 340.000 kiloliters of fuel, but on the home page of the US armed forces, the figure posted for fuel supplies provided by the MSDF for use in Iraq operations is approximately 86.63 million gallons (or approximately 330,000 kiloliters). If this is true, over 85 PERCENT of the entire amount of fuel supplied by the MSDF has been used for Iraq operations.

Eda later stated: "I only intended to raise the issue; I did not intend to say on TV that the figure as posted was correct. However, there is a high probability that within the US forces, both the Afghan and Iraqi campaigns are a unified whole, and if that is so, it is clear that there has been a deviation from the purpose of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law. The United States says that it will disclose information, including classified intelligence, so in my view, there should be a thorough clearing up of the facts.

In response, Deputy Spokesman Akiyama Kenji Akiyama stated: "Though there is a campaign in Iraq, it is hard to fathom the US forces going all the way to the Indian Ocean for refueling. We are now inquiring about this of the US forces."

However, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) lawmaker Akihisa Nagashima stated: "The US Navy's Fifth Fleet, which is carrying out operations in Afghanistan and Iraq locates its headquarters in Bahrain. It is fully conceivable that warships refueled in the Indian Ocean would continue on to Iraq to carry out operations there."

He continued: "Strictly speaking, the purpose of the Iraq Special Measures Law is humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, as well as support activities to maintain security. Since the latter is said to be support for the US forces engaged in security public law and order, there was no immediate breach of the law. However, the government until now has not fully come out with information, and there has been no explanation at all about supplying fuel for use in the Iraq campaign. The government's explanations have been falsehoods."

With this new cause for concern, what will happen now to the anti-terror law?

SCHIEFFER